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Julia Jones
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Dear Mrs Jones

Ofsted visit to Barons Court Primary School

Following my visit with David Milligan, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI), to your school on 10 December 2020, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the visit's findings. Thank you for the time you made available to discuss your actions since September 2020, when the government expected all schools to open fully to all pupils.

This visit was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended) and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for visiting schools while routine inspections are temporarily suspended.

Ofsted's visits to schools during the autumn term are not inspections. We are not giving graded judgements. We did not undertake the usual range of inspection activities and were unable to check other sources of evidence, such as visits to lessons or looking at pupils' work. The content of this letter gives an overview of our discussions about what has happened in your school this term.

During the visit, we spoke to you, the senior leadership team and phase leaders. We did not speak to pupils because of the protective measures in place.

Context

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's education system is managing the return to full

education for pupils following an extended break in formal schooling due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

In undertaking this focused work, HMI are visiting a broad range of schools. HMI will visit a sample of:

- approximately 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades (outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate)
- maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision, including those in cities, and coastal, town or rural communities.

The information from this visit will feed into Ofsted's national reporting so that the insights can be shared with the government and the education sector. We did not find any significant concerns during the visit. In such a case, an inspection report would be published on our website and available to parents and carers.

We did not consider your response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020, when the school was not open to all pupils.

From this visit, inspectors noted that:

- Around 20% of pupils have had to self-isolate since the school reopened to all pupils in September 2020. No groups of pupils have had to work from home.
- All pupils are studying the usual range of subjects. Much of the school's curriculum remains the same as it once was. For example, hands-on practical work continues in cooking and design technology. Where changes have been made, for instance in physical education, leaders hope to return to the usual curriculum by summer 2021.
- Across the school, teachers checked pupils' reading and writing knowledge. Some younger pupils had difficulty with their fine motor skills, for example holding pens and forming letters. Some had forgotten letter sounds that they once knew. Teachers are using additional phonics and handwriting lessons to help pupils catch up.
- Some pupils in Year 2 and Year 3 had lost their stamina to read independently for long periods of time. Leaders have introduced a wider variety of books across the school. Teachers have also given pupils more opportunity to read in class.
- Teachers' checks in mathematics showed that younger pupils had difficulty remembering shapes. Older pupils needed reminders of measurement and place value. Teachers are working with pupils in class to help them learn content that was missed, before moving on to new learning.

- Leaders are keen for pupils to continue to have the experiences they usually have. The school's location allows pupils to take part in 'beach days' and other outdoor learning activities. Virtual visits to local places of worship continue.
- For pupils self-isolating at home, the school provides a similar curriculum to that at school. Leaders have chosen a combination of paper-based work packs and digital materials that are matched to learning in school. In addition, younger pupils have access to online phonics lessons.

Thank you again for contributing to this important national work. The views and experiences you have shared will help to inform future policy.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Southend-on-Sea. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Damian Loneragan
Her Majesty's Inspector